Artificial Nesting Structures For Wildlife

Definition
Develop nest structures and/or brush piles for cavity nesting birds and mammals or install nesting/basking/hibernacula structures for reptiles and amphibians.

Purpose
Installation of nesting/basking/hibernacula structures will benefit birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

Where Used
Nesting structures vary widely in design. As you consider an artificial habitat structure, carefully review the target species biology and habitat requirements. All necessary components of the species habitat should be present for the structure to be successful.

Documentation Required
Contact the local NRCS office for assistance in obtaining structure designs. The appropriate structure design shall be placed in the contract folder

Operation and Maintenance
Structures shall be inspected and maintenance completed on an annual basis.

Payment Rate
Payment per structure for up to four structures for cavity nesting birds and mammals and up to four structures for reptiles and amphibians.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Time haying or grazing to avoid the period (5/1 to 8/1) when wildlife are nesting, fawning, etc and allow for the establishment of residual cover for wildlife.

Definition
Time haying and/or livestock grazing to avoid period (5/1 to 8/1) when wildlife are nesting, fawning, etc and to allow for the establishment of residual cover for wildlife.

Purpose
Secure nesting cover is often limited to where crop and hay production is the primary land use. Delaying the mechanical harvest of tame hayland until July 1 provides undisturbed wildlife escape, roosting, nesting, or winter cover and food. Undisturbed grass/forb cover blocks provide nesting cover while haying and crop management activities are occurring on adjacent fields, Herbaceous cover plots also provide roosting and thermal cover allowing a variety of wildlife species to access cropland food supplies during winter. Pollinator insects also benefit from undisturbed cover.

Where Used
Can be used for entire or portions of tame hayland fields. A minimum width of 100' will be applied

Documentation Required

Year	Field/Tract Number	Acres	Acres of Delayed Harvest	Target Wildlife Species

Payment Rate
Payment per acre of mechanical forage harvest delayed until August 1.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Leave hayfield strip >100 ft uncut to provide habitat for native pollinators (minimum of 10% of each field)

Definition

Un-harvested tame hay land for wildlife escape, roosting, nesting or winter cover and food.

Purpose

Secure nesting cover is often limited where crop and hay production is the primary land use. Un-harvested tame hay land provides undisturbed wildlife escape, roosting, nesting or winter cover and food. Un-harvested grass/forb cover blocks provide nesting cover while haying and crop management activities are occurring on adjacent fields. Herbaceous cover plots also provide roosting and thermal cover allowing a variety of wildlife species to access cropland food supplies during winter. Pollinator insects also benefit from undisturbed cover.

Where Used

Can be used for entire or portions of tame hay land fields. Minimum acres of un-harvested hay land fields can not be less than 10% of each field with a minimum width of 100'. The same area of un-harvested hay land can be used for a maximum of 3 consecutive years.

Operation and Maintenance

Hay can not be used for aftermath grazing the growing season left un-harvested. Un-harvested hay fields must be in a block nearing as square a configuration as possible.

Documentation Required

Year	Field Number	Acres	Acres Un-harvested	Target Wildlife Species

Payment – Payment per acre of forage un-harvested.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mow hayfields from the center outward to allow for wildlife escape routes

Definition

Secure nesting cover is often limited where crop and hay production is the primary land use. Tame hay land provides wildlife escape, roosting, nesting or winter cover and food. Herbaceous cover plots also provide roosting and thermal cover allowing a variety of wildlife species to access cropland food supplies during winter. Utilization of a flushing bar allows wildlife to exit the hay field during mechanical harvest operations thereby reducing wildlife mortality and nest destruction.

Where Used

Can be used for entire or portions of tame hayland fields.

Documentation Required

Field Number	Acres	Target Wildlife Species

Payment Rate - Payment per acre of hay land harvested from the center outward.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Enhance winter wildlife food through no tillage residue management for the duration of the contract

Definition

Annual crop residues left undisturbed from harvest.

Purpose

Crop residues provide food and cover for migratory and resident wildlife species. Left undisturbed, these crop residues provide food that is readily accessible until heavy snow fall. Tall stubble will provide a safer environment for wildlife, especially ground feeding birds such as sharp-tailed grouse, pheasants, mourning doves, and turkey. Tall stubble catches more snow, reducing the amount of snow that enters into the winter cover and will provide snow burrowing opportunities for sharp-tailed grouse and Hungarian partridge.

Where Used

This wildlife enhancement provides a food source and cover for various wildlife species on all cropland fields.

Operation and Maintenance

Un-disturbed crop residues must be left standing from harvest. No mechanical treatment or aftermath grazing is allowed.

Crop Year	Field Number	Acres	Crop Type

Payment Rate - Payment per acre of cropland left untilled.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Inter-seed native legumes and/or forbs into grass stands and establish native grass species in non-native grass areas that are not currently beneficial to wildlife.

Definition

Convert existing non-wildlife beneficial grass areas that are not currently providing quality wildlife habitat to native grass and forbs.

Purpose

Secure nesting cover is often limited where crop and hay production is the primary land use. Diverse native grass/forb cover blocks provide nesting and brood rearing cover. Herbaceous cover plots also provide roosting and thermal cover allowing a variety of wildlife species to access adjacent cropland food supplies during winter. Pollinator insects also benefit from undisturbed cover.

Where Used

Native herbaceous cover forbs (at least 3 grasses and 2 forbs) can be established on areas of existing non-native vegetation such as; pivot corners, odd areas, between crop fields, etc.

Operation and Maintenance

Native herbaceous cover plots will remain undisturbed during the primary nesting season (May 1 – August 1). Prescribed grazing, burning, or haying (maximum of 1 year in 5) may be done, under a plan approved by NRCS, to maintain vigor of the cover and as a part of biological weed control.

Documentation Required

Field Number	Acres	Native grass and forb species	Target Wildlife Species

Payment Rate - Payment per acre of non-native grass converted to native grasses and forbs.

Signature _____ **Date**_____

Conservation Buffer Enhancement - Wildlife

Definition

Add a minimum of 30’ to the width of any existing perennial buffer utilizing a mixture of native perennial vegetation.

Purpose

Perennial vegetation buffers can provide wildlife habitat, wildlife movement corridors, reduce salinity, and improve water quality by reducing sediments, organic matter and other pollutants entering aquatic systems.

Where Used

Apply this enhancement to existing buffers along any water course or water body located in cropland to enhance wildlife habitat. The planned perennial vegetation (trees, shrubs, grasses, forbs and legumes) shall be appropriate to landscape based on Trygg maps, and are to be left undisturbed throughout the growing season.

Operation and Maintenance

Herbaceous vegetation can be manipulated at a maximum of once every 5 years to maintain plant vigor. Haying, grazing, prescribed burning, light disking can be used to manipulate the herbaceous, perennial vegetation. No payment reduction is required during the year manipulated.

Documentation Required

Buffer Type	Field Number	Width (ft)	Acres	Management

Payment Rate

Payment per acre of established and maintained perennial buffers.

Signature _____ **Date**_____